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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a detailed design for installing a program of assessment for a program of communication studies at a midwestern university. The paper outlines the specific goal-setting procedures as well as the collaborative efforts by faculty and students in providing diverse pre-program, mid-program, post-program, and cognitive learning assessment. The paper also enumerates the 12 competencies to be taught in 5 core courses; they comprise competencies in the following areas: critical thinking, interpersonal processes, language, leadership, reading, research, oral communication, cultural appreciation, writing, decision-making, theoretical understanding, and ethical/philosophical appreciation. The paper includes 39 references as well as 2 figures and 10 appendixes explaining assessment and implementation techniques. (KEH)

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Communication Studies Assessment Report:
A Program for Implementing a Competency-Based Core Curriculum

March 8, 1991

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Abstract: The purpose of this report is to describe a design for installing a program of assessment for the Department of Communication Studies, University of Missouri--Kansas City. After goal setting, the faculty and students will work together in providing diverse pre-program, mid-program, and post-program assessment. The result of assessment to date has been a competency-based core curriculum to begin Fall, 1991. The specific procedures and implementation techniques that will be used are included.

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Communication Studies Assessment:
A Program for Implementing a Competency-Based Core Curriculum

Approximately four years ago, we began developing procedures for assessment of student learning in our program of communication studies. Like those in other states, we started our task while facing the problem that our state-mandated assessment provided virtually no guidelines for support or procedures (Gilbert, 1990). As might be expected, we raised questions about the motivation and funding for such program assessment. We wondered if the state's desire for accountability would overshadow our faculty's desire for program quality (Heaney, 1990). Although our program of assessment in still "in process," early stages are already causing changes within our department. In our case, the modifications are totally faculty-initiated. The major change is a new competency-based core curriculum for communication majors. Our program of assessment is based on seven assumptions.

1. The fundamental purpose of assessment is to improve student learning.

2. Assessment will be successful only if it involves both faculty and students in the process (Meadows, 1975; Williford, 1990).

3. The best approach to assessment is a varied one that includes formats for collecting similar data over time, and constantly changing methods that can enable new perspectives on assessment (Cowart, 1991).

4. Effective goal setting and revision is essential in coordinating effective assessment (see Appendix A).

5. Core curriculum design should be one outcome of the assessment process (Graduate Program..., 1991).

6. Data should not be collected without faculty analysis and discussion of its implications for instructional change (Heaney, 1990).

7. Although the teacher is the single most important factor in student success, learning depends more on student behavior than teacher behavior (Cross, 1991).

With these assumptions serving as a foundation, a departmental committee set to the task of reviewing current literature on assessment so that we could design a program-specific assessment procedure. Perhaps our program was like Arthur Levine's (1978) analogy of

"junkyard" curriculum littered with sixty years of reforms and inheritances of the past. So, we set to combine many ideas about a competency-based core curriculum into a uniquely integrated configuration. The ideas here are not new--they come from a variety of sources--but the composite is new. The purpose of this article is to delineate the processes in developing our departmental assessment program designed to improve faculty effectiveness and student learning.

Background

Competency-based assessment is by no means a novel idea or an area of research only within the communication discipline. In the 1970's, the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education encouraged competency-based curriculum on the college level (Grant, 1979, p. ix). Toward that end, the value of competency-based undergraduate curriculum was established in the 1970's at Sterling College (Levine, 1979, pp. 513-514). The competency-based education movement has been an "unobtrusive revolution" that is a response to education "characterized by utility, institutional accountability, time-free patterns, and lack of prescription....Its focus is on development and assessment of specific human abilities." (Rudolph, 1977, 268). Because such characterization falls short of our department's perception of a desirable education, we wanted to build in competencies related to critical thinking, aesthetic appreciation, and ethical perspective. Our desire was to take advantage of developments in the movement while guarding against fallacies inherent in the competency approach.

It has taken nearly twenty years for the assessment movement to be set as a Speech Communication Association priority ("Ed Policies..., 1991).In recent years, many of our colleagues have sought to devise ways to develop competency-based instruction and assessment that will make the job easier for all of us (e.g. Rubin, 1984c; Friedman, 1984; Woltjen & Zakahi, 1987; Grossman, 1988; Vangelisti & Daly, 1989; Quianthy, 1990). As early as 1978, an issue of Communication Education was devoted to communication literacy (see volume 31, 1978), and the first systematic review and evaluation of current assessment tests was reported in the text Assessing Functional Communication (Larson, Backlund, Redmond, & Barbour, 1978). The most ambitious assessment test of communication competence developed to date is probably the

Communication Competency Assessment Instrument (Rubin, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1984a, 1984b, 1985). The Competency Assessment Instrument (CCAI) has demonstrated reliability and validity as an assessment of behavioral competence in communication. The instrument assesses communication competence along four dimensions of functional competence: communication codes, oral message evaluation, basic speech communication skills, and human relations. Another major step in developing competency-based assessment in our field was through the creation of the Committee on Assessment and Testing in the Speech Communication Association. The Assessment Interest Group has defined the issues that affect assessment decisions and products. The eight problems that they identified are important to anyone developing an assessment program (Backlund, 1989):

1. What should be assessed?
2. What should be the format of assessment procedure?
3. What is the ideal (versus practical) assessment procedure?
4. What is the purpose and use of assessment data collection?
5. How can communication educators devise testing that goes beyond skill or knowledge and is interactional?
6. How can instruments be developed that avoid cultural, ethnic, and gender bias?
7. Who is assessment designed to inform?
8. Can a procedure be developed that satisfies all groups involved (pp. 67-68)?

Although all of the above questions are important ones, perhaps the most controversial is number 4, which more specifically might be: Will collected data be used against faculty? Particularly when assessment is mandated from higher administrative levels during difficult economic times, most faculty question its purpose. The tendency may be to respond: "I'll give them some statistics so they'll get off my back," or " I'm not going to participate in helping the administration ruin our program." While these are understandable reactions, there are three good reasons for a faculty-initiated, comprehensive program of self-assessment. First, faculty can develop the methods and criteria they think most appropriate for their own program rather than having such imposed against their will. Second, by developing a diverse approach to

evaluation, faculty can pick and choose which information is to be used internally "for their eyes only," and which is appropriate for administrative review. Third, effective assessment strives to improve student learning and faculty effectiveness, which will strengthen rather than weaken programs, consequently making programs less susceptible to administrative intrusion.

So, with these assumptions and rationale in mind, we delineate the process underway in the Department of Communication Studies. This department consists of two areas of emphasis: Mass Communication and Speech Communication. Although each emphasis area is intended to fulfill uniquely different objectives, all graduating majors are expected to demonstrate proficiency in basic communication competencies (see Figure 2). Among these include oral communication competence and basic understanding of the theoretical principles of communication. The groundwork for the process is faculty goal setting (see Appendix A) and a general department evaluation (Appendix B). Once that foundation is established, the assessment can be divided into four aspects: pre-program assessment, mid-program assessment, post-program assessment, and the multistaged assessment of cognitive learning.

Assessment Procedures

The assessment procedures permit a variety of steps before, during, and after the student's program completion. Before beginning our discussion of the three-phase assessment program, we should clarify that several of the assessment methods will be used in more than one phase. The objective test of cognitive learning will be used in pre- and post-assessment, while the portfolio is used in all three phases (see Figure 1). The faculty is aware of the commitment required to ensure the success of the program and the logistics required to track students through all phases of assessment. We have decided to address such concerns by (1) assigning each student a faculty mentor with whom he or she will regularly meet and (2) conducting a faculty seminar specifically for the purpose of tracking students across their course work. The entire faculty will meet during the semester to compare student progress. Thus, students will be assessed by the faculty mentor and by faculty with whom the student has completed a course. Enhancing

the subjective dimension of evaluation will enable instructor-based observation of communication performance.

Pre-program Assessment. In order to better understand our students, we need to assess their learning as they enter the program. In the past, students were required to provide certain information at the time they declared their major: all incoming majors must have completed two English composition courses with an earned GPA of 2.5 and also must have completed the basic public speaking course and the basic communication theory course with a 2.5 GPA. All students have been advised by one faculty member to assure consistency of procedure and information. Now, a cornerstone course will furnish additional direction and assessment in the process (see Core Curriculum section). The course will emphasize theory-building, applied communication issues, ethical communication principles, an overview of the research process, and a brief history and structure of the profession. Note, we will continue to offer the first year college course for non-majors because the course services nearly 300 students a semester.

We have designed the cornerstone course as a foundation for our upper-divisional courses; that is, we want students to possess "discipline literacy" upon entering upper-level courses so that they have a critical framework by which to organize communication inquiry as well as evaluate research and readings within the discipline. The cornerstone course is not only an overview of the field of communication, but also intended to provide philosophical-theoretical underpinnings of the student's chosen discipline and instill an appreciation and understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of communication.

Under new assessment procedures, when students declare a major in communication studies, they will be required to furnish pre-program assessment materials. One should note that although we are calling this "pre-program assessment," most students will have completed one core course in public speaking. Two major methods will be used: a student portfolio and a departmental pretest (see Assessment of Cognitive Learning section). For the portfolio, students will be asked to include examples of their written work, a resume, an essay about professional goals, and other relevant information (see Appendix C).

The Department of Communication Studies will use the portfolio to assess basic writing competence and the student's motivation for selecting Communication Studies as a major. We also view the portfolio as a way for students to center their energies, both academically and pre-professionally, without narrowing their educational experience to only their immediate interests and priorities. Student portfolios may, indeed, reflect either a fragmented or an overly-specialized understanding of the discipline or an underestimated role of the degree in their career plans. That knowledge, too, would prove useful to the department in reassessing the content of the core curriculum courses. The portfolio is a required assignment in the cornerstone course, and students are required to update the portfolio in the capstone course. Students will be given a list of items they are required to file along with many options. Not only will the portfolio engage students in the process of self-evaluation and priority setting, but it will encourage them to take steps toward preparation for advanced academic study (e.g. providing GRE score) and professional career interviews (e.g. including resume and goal setting). These characteristics justify the assignment on pedagogical grounds. In addition, faculty will be able to review the files to assess student performance and skills. The varied approach should improve understanding of the student's learning outcomes.

The portfolio is further designed to integrate cognitive learning with experiential or behavioral learning. Several of the portfolio elements are included to match the learning components that we also have integrated into our required core courses (see Competency-based core curriculum and Figure 2). That is, the portfolio will not only serve as a direct means of assessing student performance but also will be used to encourage students to evaluate their performance using the learning components (see Figure 1). Thus, although the portfolio is product-driven, it also includes elements through which students may analyze the relevant communication processes.

Insert Figure 1 about here.

Mid-Program Assessment.

Midterm assessment will consist of four major elements. They are: (a) a core curriculum of required courses, (b) a strengthening of the written communication competence component already included in several courses, (c) the use of standardized ratings forms consistent with the twelve learning components outlined in Figure 2, and (d) a mid-semester assessment of student performance and student perceptions of their communication courses.

The method of writing competence assessment warrants special attention. For years the English department has operated a "writing intensive" program across the curriculum. Our department is currently among eight of seventeen departments within the College of Arts and Sciences participating in the program. We plan to increase the number of "writing intensive" courses we offer from four to seven, including one course from the departmental core (Communication 483, see Core Curriculum section of this paper) and one course from each subcore requirement in speech communication and mass communication.

The English Department has defined a "writing intensive" course as requiring a minimum of five thousand written words. To be listed as "writing intensive", a course also must have a feedback component that requires revision of completed work so that students may monitor their improvement throughout the semester. Our rationale for targeting these three additional courses as "writing intensive" is so that we may monitor students' writing competence at three stages of development: first, as sophomores entering the department (in the cornerstone course); second, while they complete their required subcore as juniors; and third, as seniors who are about to graduate (in the capstone course). The Department of Communication Studies also has designated another six courses within the departmental core and subcores as "writing extensive." These courses differ from the "writing intensive" primarily in the number of required words produced; "writing extensive" will require a three-thousand words minimum rather than a five-thousand word minimum.

Another major change in mid-program assessment is the use of standardized rating forms for assignments in all the core courses. Each is designed to emphasize at least one of the twelve Department of Communication Studies competencies (see Figure 2). Faculty also are

encouraged to use these forms in providing feedback in all their courses. The repeated use of a standardized form focuses faculty and students on the elements that are essential to focusing faculty and students on attaining competencies (e.g. Appendix H, Appendix I).

The department is committed to fostering greater diversity in our on-going assessment. The possibilities for different approaches is probably limited only by the people involved in the process, as demonstrated by one institution that uses 265 assessment activities (Underwood, 1990). Through their varied classroom research, faculty can gain important insights into improving instructions. Because most students establish their opinion of a course and teacher approximately one third of the way through the semester or term (Cross, 1991), faculty are encouraged to assess early in the course. Such mid-course assessment may be valuable in several contexts: when the faculty member is new to teaching, new to teaching a particularly course, or when the teacher perceives a problem developing in a class. Such in-class evaluations can take many forms. First, faculty may use the "one minute or five minute write." Besides improving student writing skills, this technique increases feedback to faculty and focuses the student on learning goals. At the end of the class session, the student might answer one or more questions:

1. What was the most important thing you learned today?
2. In what way did you contribute to the learning of the other students in this class today?
3. What significant questions do you have about what you learned today?
4. What have you learned today about your ability to communicate effectively?
5. Write a metaphor about what you learned today.

Second, the teacher may ask one class member to conduct a course assessment discussion (without the teacher present) and make an oral summary report without using student names. Third, a teacher also may use a written method, such as the one indicated in Appendix F. Fourth, the teacher may ask students to rank their goals for the course (see Appendix J). Not only will student goal setting serve to focus students, but it will encourage faculty to recognize and adapt to

student needs and expectations. Fifth, to reduce paper work while still receiving feedback, the teacher may tell students at the beginning of a class session: "About five minutes before the end of the period, I will call on one student to give a summary of what he or she has learned today. Each of you should be ready to give a coherent and interesting presentation because I may call on anyone." Such an approach motivates students similarly to testing, requires practice of good oral communication skills, and focuses student learning (Cross, 1991).

Post-program Assessment. There will be three major aspects to post-program assessment: a capstone course (see Core Curriculum section), a posttest (see Assessment of Cognitive Learning section), and graduate follow-up assessment (an exit interview).

A final post-graduation measure was developed in the nature of a telephone survey of graduates because of the valuable information that can be gained from the approach (Conklin, 1990). The survey acts as as an exit interview. Within one year of graduation, a representative of the department will telephone graduates to ask questions about the graduate's general reactions to the program (see Appendix G). They will conduct interviews following an interview schedule. The main emphasis will be on the graduate's evaluation of the twelve learning components--critical thinking skills, interpersonal competence, language competence, leadership competence, reading competence, research competence, oral communication competence, cultural appreciation, writing competence, decision-making competence, theoretical competence, and ethical/philosophical appreciation--and the extent to which the graduate perceives competence in each area. Certainly competence can be gained from many sources, and no one would expect sole credit to go to the department for the graduate's accomplishment of objectives. On the other hand, if the graduate fails to achieve competence in these areas, then he or she does not possess the characteristics of the department's ideal graduate. In which case, the graduate would not meet the faculty's expectations.

Additional questions will be asked of graduates regarding their employment, how well the program met the student's personal objectives, the most valuable aspect of the program, outstanding teaching, and suggestions for improving the program. After the perspective of time

and employment, the graduate should be able to give valuable contributions to program assessment.

Although there is no long term measure of the curriculum and competencies in this program, that should be a logical final step to develop at a later date.

Assessment of Cognitive Learning. Pre- and post-assessment of cognitive learning will be through the current version of the Communication Assessment Measure (CAM). Although the pretest that students take may not be the same as the posttest they take, normative data can be determined through this established procedure (Neer, 1990). The CAM (pretest-posttest) developed for current use is an indirect-based evaluation similar to that developed by Scafe and Siler (1979). Thus, the CAM assessment test has been a written objective test and not a direct test involving instructor-based observation of communication performance. Although indirect tests fail to provide a means of identifying behavioral deficiencies in communication, they may be used to measure cognitive communication ability as an underlying component of communication competence. For instance, Rubin (1985) reported that scores on a self-report scale of communication knowledge correlated at .52 with the behavior-based CCAI. These findings suggest that knowledge of how to communicate, in part, predicts how one actually communicates. While cognitive ability may not be used as a singular predictor of communication competence, indirect tests may be appropriate for diagnosing cognitive deficiencies contributing to behavioral incompetence.

The posttest has traditionally been a four-part assessment instrument consisting of multiple-choice items (85% of the test) and one short essay question (15% of the test grade). All parts of the assessment test have been equally weighed for a possible total of 120 points. Approximately one-fifth of each component included multiple-choice items which required synthesis and application of course material as opposed to simple recall and comprehension-based testing items. There are two forms of the test: mass communication emphasis or speech communication emphasis. The assessment required approximately one and one-half to two hours to complete. We hope to narrow the gap between cognitive knowledge and behavioral knowledge through additional case

study testing methods. The value of the case method is well-documented as a form of "gestalt" learning or learning that requires synthesis, application, and evaluation of information (e.g. Christiansen & Hansen, 1981; Kreps & Lederman, 1985). With an increase in case method questions, we hope to instill the norm that information must be "processed" on higher levels of learning if it is to become useable knowledge.

This department developed its CAM assessment test for diagnostic purposes. That is, we were concerned with developing a placement test for incoming transfer students who may have completed some required courses at other four-year institutions and two-year colleges. The test also was intended for eventual use in diagnosing a student's cognitive competence relevant to advanced course work in speech and mass communication. Although enrollment would not be denied on the basis of assessment scores, the assessment would be used to determine if basic theoretical principles learned in the core courses need to be reintroduced before proficiency can be attained in the advanced courses.

The analysis of CAM posttest results has been based on 97 students over a three semester period. The test is being restructured to better emphasize testing of learning competencies rather than focusing on individual courses. The proposed restructuring of the assessment should help to reduce information decay by providing students with a series of categories in which to organize the enormous amounts of material tested in the newly proposed core. More importantly, these categorical labels (i.e. learning competencies) should encourage students to think holistically while focusing their attention on the interdisciplinary nature of their course work and the communication discipline.

The results of the testing have been disappointing for faculty, indicating that students have significant information decay and that faculty need to employ measures to improve student retention of information. Nevertheless, the test has demonstrated external validity: grade point average (GPA) correlates at .44 with the CAM while regression demonstrates that for every increase in GPA by one point, assessment scores increase by six points ($MR = .44$, $r\text{-squared} = .194$, $B = .06$, $F = 6.52$, $p < .007$; Constant = 71.51). When GPA was dichotomized

above 3.12 and below 2.88, mean differences were observed (Low GPA = 78.87, High GPA = 85.83. $F = 4.10$, $p < .05$).

One problem that has developed with the CAM is the lack of motivation on the part of graduating seniors to perform well on the test. Although we require no certain score for graduation, we do want students to perform their best. At this point, the score is required for the graduation portfolio for use by faculty when writing letters of reference. The implicit suggestion to students with this procedure for writing letters of recommendation is that their score on the post-CAM could be used by faculty in formulating one aspect of their recommendations. In addition, students with high scores on the test may be awarded a departmental certificate of merit or other special recognition at the graduation ceremony.

Beginning in Fall 1991, the CAM will have a reorganized format. Rather than testing individual courses through separate sections of the test, the CAM will be reformatted along the lines of the learning components or communication competencies. This procedure will be used to reinforce the integrative and interdisciplinary nature of knowledge of communication. Thus, while individual courses are singularly important to themselves, we prefer our graduates--when asked: "what do you study in communication?"--provide a coherent overview of the discipline rather than describing to someone what they learned "in this course or in that course."

Competency-based Core Curriculum

Through goal setting, the department determined twelve competencies to be taught in five core courses. Rather than testing courses, we identified core competency components that students should have regardless of the courses in which they enroll. More importantly, students should graduate with an understanding of what they have learned rather than simply listing the courses they have taken. A competency core will focus students' educational experiences and permit faculty to identify what is most important for students to know and for faculty to assess. That is, a core of learning components should assist students to think holistically--rather than linerally--by seeking the interrelationships across their accumulated coursework, so that they synthesize rather than compartmentalize their knowledge of

communication. Course objectives, assignments, and continuous assessment are motivated by the twelve competencies.

Insert Figure 2 about here

As Figure 2 demonstrates, the twelve competencies are well-integrated throughout the required core curriculum. Every course incorporates at least five of the competencies. Further, each competency appears in at least two core courses, with half the competencies included in at least three of the the five core courses. While our structuring of communication competencies across the curriculum is not new information to educators, we feel it will remind students that much of what they learn in one course will serve as a foundation for the next course. In other words, the core will provide a form of integrated learning because what is learned in one course will be reexamined and expanded within the context of the next course. Thus, the course numbering code is intended to reflect the cumulative or developmental learning structured across the core. Although few students enroll in the courses out of sequence, the core course x communication competence matrix in Figure 2--which students will receive upon declaring their major--will provide a rationale for why the courses must be completed in sequence. To ensure a common understanding, a description of each competency is provided here.

Critical Thinking Competence. Critical thinking competence includes the careful analysis and interpretation of messages. In addition, the student should be able to analyze supporting materials, make connections and applications to various contexts, demonstrate concentration, and understand the logic of various thinking patterns. These skills are particularly important in critical listening, intrapersonal processing, effective writing, being a knowledgeable media consumer, and evaluating persuasion messages.

The process skills related to critical thinking include improving the student's attitudes: that lead to the many improved skills: a value of open-ended dialogue, trust in the rational examination of ideas, open-mindedness to others' ideas, respect fair-mindedness, indignation at unrecognized arbitrariness, and the desire to seek

learning for learning's sake, not for earning's sake. Finally, the component includes the following process skill objectives: (a) to increase accurate observation and memory, (b) to reflect on one's bias and perspective, (c) to develop the ability to see various side of an issue, (d) to increase objectivity, (e) to recognize persuasive language, (f) to analyze premises and conclusions, (g) to recognize fallacious reasoning, (h) to determine important questions to ponder, and (i) to find answers to important questions through independent research and problem-solving skills.

Interpersonal Competence. Interpersonal competence includes skills in one-to-one and intrapersonal communication. A summary of the research on interpersonal communication (Rubin & Nevins, 1988) indicates ten major competencies: self-disclosure, empathy, social relaxation, assertiveness, interaction management, altercentrism, expressiveness, supportiveness, immediacy, environmental control. Within this framework, we include the intrapersonal variables of: perceptual processes, self-esteem and self-confidence, belief-attitude-value structures, role modeling, and role behavior. We expect students to recognize the influential role that intrapersonal processes play in affecting interpersonal outcomes. We have chosen not to designate these variables as a separate component because intrapersonal processes are an integral part of all the competencies we have identified.

Language Competence. Language competence includes an understanding of effective use of verbal and nonverbal codes. This competency comprises an understanding of the concept of symbolization; types of meanings; levels of abstraction; encoding and decoding processes; intrapersonal communication processes; sensitivity to language with gender, age, or ethnic bias; the importance of culture; the importance of language in expressing power; spatial and temporal cues; and other aspects of nonverbal communication.

Leadership Competence. Leadership competence includes skills appropriate to leadership in speech and mass communication in such contexts as family and business interaction. Leadership competence includes knowledge of problem-solving; conflict management; small group roles; persuasive techniques; task, maintenance, and social functions;

agenda setting; questioning techniques; consensus methods; and self-evaluation.

Another important component of leadership competence is self-evaluation. The ability to exercise leadership potential requires rhetorical sensitivity. Thus, leadership competence focuses on engaging the various behaviors defined above -- not as formulae or method -- but as a process of adaptation.

Reading Competence. Appreciation of communication may be enhanced by traditional communication scholarship and classical and contemporary fiction and non-fiction. Many educators are aware, for example, of the analysis of Virginia Wolfe from a communication perspective introduced in the classic Pragmatics of Human Communication (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). Darnell (1999) asserted that learning is enhanced when the learner has control of the learning process. Hirsch (1987) further suggested that the background knowledge one brings to a learning situation allows the learner to contextualize information and derive "meaning" from instruction.

Thus, students take control of the learning process when they are able to create an enlarged context for examining abstract communication theories and principles. Literature that focuses on cultural and social analysis may be one means of expanding and enlarging understanding of communication across a variety of experiential contexts.

Reading competence includes comprehension, analysis, and memory of reading designed for a variety of audiences (e.g. professional scholarship, trade publications, popular culture). Reading competence incorporates: reading with and without teacher guidance, reading that is self-initiated, using assigned materials, seeking library resources, considering fiction and nonfiction. Students should be able to write so that their writing reflects their reading ability. In addition, they should be familiar with the classic literature of the field of speech and mass communication.

Douglas Wilson (1991), writing in a recent issue of the Atlantic on the relationship between literacy and achievement, concluded by stating that literacy offers a mode of imaginative transport by which to expand one's field of experience. One expects that a well-rounded

reader would gain insights on how to write well and have something worthwhile about which to write.

Research Competence. Research competence includes four general areas: (a) recognizing appropriate scientific methods of research, (b) discovery of facts and issues relevant to the task at hand, (c) employing creative use of problem solving, and (d) using computer and library sources. These skills will be used in writing and speaking applications, in which one applies sources of sufficient number, quality, and variety to support ones ideas. In addition, research competence incorporates correct use of a commonly used style manual, identification of recent and classic works in the field of study, use of scholarly sources, use of a reference list that reflects works cited, adequate support for ideas, sufficient citations for the ideas used or quoted, and ability to research original works. While using a process-orientation, the student should be able to select information, recognize assumptions, construct hypotheses, and use inference to obtain valid conclusions.

One of our principal motivations for emphasizing research competence is to assist students in reading communication research. When conducting literature reviews as communication professionals, we expect students to have sufficient research literacy to evaluate the validity of the literature they read. Among the research tools that students should have include: differentiating primary from secondary sources, sampling methods used in generating data, research and critical designs selected in identifying variables, the significance of sample size, and factors contributing to internal and external validity in historical-critical and other forms of research. Understanding the research process is intended to guard against unquestioning acceptance of research findings and the perception that research is unintelligible.

Oral Communication Competence. Oral communication competence includes the general categories of effective application of competencies involving the source, the message, the receiver(s), and the context. First, this competency includes the ability to select appropriate topics that fit the source, audience, and occasion. Whether used in phatic communication or formal public speaking, the student should recognize the appropriate use of time, exchange, and adaptation. Second, the

student should be able to use an introduction to gain attention, build credibility, disclose purpose, and motivate the listener. Third, the student should use organization that is clear, simple, and appropriate. Fourth, the student should be able to use an adequate variety of support, logical proofs, emotional appeals, appeals to needs or motivations, adequate attention devices, and appropriate visual aids. Fifth, the student should be capable of making concluding remarks in a way that makes a message memorable, summarizes, and appeals for action when needed. Sixth, a student should be able to use an effective verbal and nonverbal delivery style. That style should support ones ideas through appropriate voice and pronunciation quality, flexibility, emphasis, correctness and variety; and appropriate language clarity through concreteness, vividness, forcefulness, and style.

Cultural Appreciation. Cultural appreciation includes an appreciation of communication and mass media in the United States. Cultural appreciation includes knowledge of the history and traditions of the fields of speech and media communication. In addition, the student should possess an aesthetic appreciation of the forms of media communication. It also includes a sensitivity of communication differences between different cultures. Thus, becoming "culturally sensitive" requires the same introspection and reflexivity that underpins every other communication competence. The intended outcome, and our rationale for intensifying the cultural component is to foster appreciation of all cultures and recognizing the limits of our own culture.

Writing Competence. Writing competence contains four major elements. First, the student should be able to select a topic and purpose that is appropriate, relevant, sufficiently narrow in focus, and clearly phrased. Second, research should be adequate, relevant, and up-to-date. Third, the student should uphold a standard writing that includes an adaptation to specific style manual and teacher requirements. Within that framework, the student should be able to revise and integrate ideas related to feedback from earlier draft(s). The student should develop a clear, scholarly writing style that uses acceptable spelling, grammar, technical aspects, and organization. Finally, the student should be able to express a clarity of ones ideas

in a well-developed (not verbose) manner. That manner should include adequate support, critical analysis and insights, fresh points of view, creative insights, and careful thought and preparation.

Decision-making Competence. Decision-making competence includes knowledge of: reflective thinking processes, rhetorical sensitivity, argumentation methods, decision emergence, task process activities, relational activities, topic focus, listening, critical thinking processes, and analysis of forms of support.

Theoretical Competence. Theoretical competence contains the ability to acknowledge the functions of theories to organize, explain, and describe experience. The student should be able to appreciate going past the observable to provide predictive knowledge, to control events, and to stimulate and guide research in the field of communication Students should be able to identify major paradigms of communication theories within differing contexts.

Glaser (1983) offered a rationale for teaching theoretical competence. She suggested that to be successful in teaching people to observe, explain, and manage their communication requires that faculty motivate students to approach their communication scientifically. Pearce (1977) further suggested that communication instruction should offer propositional knowledge through which the learner is "able to articulate (his) understanding of communication, array (his) options, and choose between them" (p.112).

Ethical and Philosophical Appreciation. Ethical and philosophical appreciation includes the ability to articulate ones basis for a personal theory of communication. Ethical appreciation comprises one's ability to evaluate motives of self and other, and to approach communication from an interdependent, altercentric, and honest perspective. Ethical considerations are particularly important within persuasion, whether sending or receiving messages. In fact, there are appropriate and inappropriate methods of persuasion. In addition, ethical conduct includes giving credit for the source of ideas and information. Toward the goal of philosophical appreciation, the student should be capable of sensitive insight, imagination, and creativity. We endorse the application of knowledge to solving pressing social problems. The student is expected to engage in the rational

investigation of the truths and principles of the field of communication studies, while having a concern for the moral values of our field in the global community.

Core Courses

When students declare their major, they will be given a packet of orientation materials with information on assessment and the components tested across the required core. We will encourage students to align the competencies with their unique interests and needs. Faculty will incorporate a similar perspective in their other courses, assignments, and testing units.

The new core curriculum was developed to provide a unified approach to instruction throughout the student's entire program. Based on the recent assessment procedures and the dismal CAM scores, the faculty felt a need to re-evaluate the program curriculum. Like most faculty, the department had developed general course objectives and sequences without developing overall goals and expectancies for the program. The program had become course-driven, rather than the courses being program-driven. The course-specific nature of assessment had failed to examine the larger picture of the department's success in improving student learning and thinking strategies. To begin the reevaluation, faculty considered the six general educational goals (Cross, 1991): (a.) teaching facts and principles of the subject matter, (b.) developing higher order thinking skills, (c.) preparing students for jobs and careers, (d.) developing student abilities (self-fulfillment), (e.) teaching basic learning skills, and (f.) providing a role model for students. The faculty committed to teaching an emphasis on the interdisciplinary nature of communication and a focus on contemporary social issues. Below is a brief description of the purpose of each course as designed for the new curriculum.

110 Fundamentals of Effective Speaking and Listening. This course designed for first year students serves as the foundation for speaking and listening competencies.

206 Introduction to the Study of Communication. This cornerstone course will provide extensive pre-program assessment. The pretest assessment instrument, for example, will be administered to students in this course. Assessment measures will be part of student assignments

(see Appendices C and J). As a sophomore level course, it will be designed for only those students interested in declaring a major in communication studies. Course content will include an introduction to our Department of Communication Studies, an introduction to the field of communication, theory building in the profession, an overview of the research process, and prominent areas of communication inquiry.

The purposes of the course include: (a) to introduce students to the major areas of inquiry within the discipline, (b) to acquaint students with the major theoretical and philosophical systems guiding communication research, (c) to develop students' research competencies, including the communication research and other research reports, (d) to demonstrate the social application of communication theory and research. Content priorities and time allocation include: introduction to the department (7%), introduction to the field (5%), theory building in the profession (12%), overview of the research process (33%), and prominent areas of communication inquiry in interpersonal, public, and mass communi ation (43%).

320 Mass Media and Human Culture. This course provides an understanding of media history, effects, and cultural appreciation. The course emphasizes the importance of being a knowledgeable media consumer in the 1990's, who has an appreciation of the historical development, artistic contributions, and cultural effects of mass media, and critical theory related to cultural studies.

340 Communication Competence in Organizational Settings. This course will focus on a wide range of communication competencies. It will include major elements of interpersonal, group, and oral communication competencies essential to human interaction across organizational settings. The decision to include such a wide range of competencies in one course is based on recent survey data from personnel managers that generated a cluster of competencies they regarded as essential to employability and promotional advancement (Curtis, Winsor, & Stephens, 1987-88). The following communication elements were rated in the upper ten percent of essential skills above job expertise and college GPA: interpersonal competence, oral communication competence, listening competence, group competence, and decision-making competence.

483 Research Competencies for the Communication Professional. This capstone course is designed to be completed near the end of a student's program. A major element of the course will be assessment of student learning. The updated portfolio (see Appendix D) and Student Knowledge Assessment Form (see Appendix E), for example, will be course requirements. The Student Knowledge Assessment Form is a checklist of concepts, people, and works, in which the student identifies items he or she does not know. The form is designed to tap information similar to the CAM posttest, but enables a quick method for assessing some of the detailed knowledge gained in the program. Actually, the measure fails to indicate what students know, but instead proves extremely useful in determining what students do NOT know. In other words, although students may be embarrassed to indicate everything they do not know the items they acknowledge are ones they definitely do not know. Thus, faculty can find out about problem areas and can continually assess students on different items.

This course (483) is an advanced introduction to the research process from epistemological and theory-building approaches to conducting and evaluating communication research. The course includes an intensive writing component that develops students' competencies in preparing literature and critical reviews, research proposals, and prospectus reports. Students' research and writing competencies will be assessed in a final research report consistent with an accepted method of scholarly inquiry.

The purposes of the course are: (a) to enable the student to gain additional expertise within a specific area of communication study, (b) to sharpen analytical and critical skills essential to defining and conducting communication research, (c) to refine the student's ability to critically evaluate communication research, (d) to perform the role of research critic by reviewing and evaluating both the written prospectus and the final written report of another student in the course. Priorities for the time allocation of content of the course include: designing the research investigation (27%), student prospectus report (7%), the investigative process (27%), status update report (7%), the investigative process (20%), and the final oral report (12%). The capstone course should be an antidote to the inclination to

overemphasize our discipline, in that the course should evolve around issues and the interdisciplinary nature of the field.

Interdisciplinary Courses. The faculty has long deliberated on the constituents of a well-rounded education in communication. One of our criteria dictated that students have a broadly-based understanding of the interdisciplinary status of the discipline. In order to provide students with a taste of the interdisciplinary nature of communication inquiry, we have decided that student should have the option of enrolling in six hours of approved course work outside the department that will carry communication credit. Therefore, we have earmarked twelve courses across the curriculum in language, culture, human relations, media graphics, screenwriting, playwriting, photography, industrial psychology, organizational behavior and film criticism that the department will accept as communication credit.

Conclusions

The push for assessment has prompted this faculty to work and coordinate their efforts in the perspective of the assessment research going on throughout the country. The result is to build a unified, core-curriculum directly linked to our communication competency goals for students.

When the administrative mandate was given to this university to assess undergraduate education, it failed to specify the type of learning to be assessed. Our original approach with the CAM posttest--like that of most other departments and colleges--focused on cognitive learning or cognitive competence rather than behavioral competence (e.g. speech-making ability or newswriting). Cognitive tests lack external validity--they may or may not reflect behavioral competence because they do not permit direct observation of behavior--but are easier to administer. The faculty found the student posttest results to be disappointing, indicating significant information decay. Faculty have decided to guard against such information decay by refreshing students' memories through a series of pedagogical devices: a) brief retesting and review in the course most appropriate or relevant to the core course, b) brief written summaries of the content of core course, c) consistent application of core competencies to course assignments, and d) program review in the capstone course

A major issue this faculty addressed was whether we wanted to continue testing only cognitive competence, or update our assessment to include a behavioral learning component. We justified testing cognitive learning by delineating the specific cognitive components we test rather than focusing on the courses we test. Furthermore, our current CAM test has demonstrated internal validity through its ability to identify several factors influencing learning (i.e., factors contributing to assessment test scores). These factors include grade point average, full versus part-time enrollment, internship enrollment and others. To provide the balance of a behavioral learning component, the portfolio was initiated. The construction and revision of the portfolio will be part of the assignments of the department's cornerstone and capstone courses. The individual teachers of those courses will assess the portfolios, but also encourage review by all department faculty.

The larger issue regarding the nature of assessment is what to test, not simply how to test. First, we have defined a content core of skills and knowledge that we deem central to a well-rounded education in speech and mass communication. Then, we have determined how to assess the competency components of this well-rounded education. We decided upon both cognitive and behavioral learning. Although the CAM only measures cognitive learning, the results have generated data useful in the long-run for diagnosing cognitive deficiencies that also may affect on behavioral learning. Even though it has taken years of effort, our diverse assessment procedures go far beyond satisfying state requirements. As we continue the process, we expect to learn more about our assessment methods as well as student performance. We believe we have improved our program and enhanced student learning. All educators have worked toward those objectives, long before anyone mandated educational assessment.

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Figure 1: Portfolio Assessment

1. CAM Score(s)*
2. Personal goals upon graduation, five, and ten years*
3. Updated student personal data sheet*
4. A recent transcript*
5. An example of your written work (preferably a major research paper)*
6. Self-assessment of any three competencies from Figure 2*
7. A resume*
8. Scholarly research report from course 483 and two major papers completed since declaration of your major*
9. Examples of written work (essay, newspaper article, advertisement, script)
10. An essay answering the question "What do you study in communication?"
11. An essay on your personal theory of communication
12. Letter of reference from employment or internship source (non-university)
13. Videotape of student performance (e.g. speech, oral report)
14. Videotape of student production
15. Explanation of outside coursework completed outside the department (by department or theme)
16. Autobiography
17. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores
18. Miller's Analogy scores
19. National Teacher's Examination (NTE) scores
20. GMAT scores
21. Other standardized test score
22. Examples of career-oriented written work (business letter, newspaper article, advertisement, script)
23. Self assessment of communication effectiveness in one extracurricular activity
24. Additional materials relating to your college study or employment experience
25. The theory of communication you have found most valuable in explaining your own communication.
26. Classical and contemporary fiction and nonfiction read in the last two years.
27. Scholarly researhc project from 483 (plus two additional research papers completed since declation of major. Include a brief statement of your previous versus current writing competence.
28. Six hour option of communication credit from outside courses.
29. Periodicals and magazines you regularly read (and why).
30. List the five books you have found most valuable in your study of communication (and why).

Figure 2: Core Curriculum Competencies
Department of Communication Studies

Competence Component	Core Curriculum					
	110	206	320	340	483	Total
1. Critical thinking competence	*	*	*		*	4
2. Interpersonal competence	*			*		2
3. Language competence	*			*		2
4. Leadership competence	*			*		2
5. Reading competence		*	*		*	3
6. Research competence	*	*			*	3
7. Oral communication competence	*			*		2
8. Cultural appreciation		*	*			2
9. Writing competence	*	*			*	3
10. Decision-making competence	*			*		2
11. Theoretical competence		*	*	*	*	4
12. Ethical/philosophical appreciation	*	*	*			3
Total (competencies serviced per course)	9	7	5	6	5	

Appendix A: Faculty Goal-Setting (adapted from Cross, 1991)

General Goals

Below are six general educational goals. Rank them from 1 (most important) to 6 (least important). In ranking, each goal will have a different response (do not use a number more than once).

Please use your computer sheet to respond and return the results to the Assessment Committee. We will discuss the results in our next faculty meeting.

1. Teaching facts and principles of the subject matter.
2. Developing higher order thinking skills.
3. Preparing students for jobs and careers.
4. Developing student abilities (self-fulfillment).
5. Teaching basic learning skills.
6. Providing a role model for students.

Teaching Goals-Competency Inventory

What should we teach? Rate those goals which you think are essential in the courses you teach.

1 = absolutely essential
2 = important
3 = useful
4 = only if extra time available
5 = not essential or not applicable

1. Critical thinking skills
2. Interpersonal competence
3. Language competence
4. Leadership competence
5. Reading competence
6. Research competence
7. Oral communication competence
8. Cultural appreciation
9. Writing competence
10. Decision-making competence
11. Theoretical competence
12. Ethical/philosophical appreciation
13. Application of communication principles
14. Knowledge of terms and facts
15. Self-esteem
16. Independent thinking
17. Value of subject
18. Responsibility for self
19. Knowledge of career aspects
20. Creativity

Comments:

Appendix B: Department Evaluation by Faculty

Instructions to the Faculty: Please take a few minutes to identify what you consider departmental strength and weaknesses. Keep your responses anonymous. Use a number two pencil to complete the computer sheet. If you would like to write some comments in essay form, please have them typed by the department secretary and turned in to us separately. Thank you for your help.

Assessment Committee

1 = very strong
2 = good
3 = satisfactory
4 = needs improvement
5 = major concern

1. Departmental goals
2. Student population served
3. New curriculum design
4. Non-core courses
5. Interpersonal relationships
6. Faculty autonomy
7. Inter-relationship or coordination of course content
8. Course syllabi or organization
9. Course scheduling
10. Instructional methodology
11. Travel
12. Faculty development
13. Student advising
14. Enrollment trends
15. Communication majors
16. Serving non-majors
17. Faculty evaluation
18. Facilities and equipment
19. Financial resources
20. Research support

Appendix C: Assessment of Student Learning through Portfolio Method
Pre-Program

TO: Students Declaring Communication Major

FROM: Communication Studies Faculty

RE: Student Portfolio

All students majoring in Communication Studies are required to keep a portfolio as part of the department's ongoing assessment program. The primary purpose of this portfolio is to provide faculty with information for writing letters of reference for students. We also are using the portfolio system for departmental evaluation, and we need your help to improve our program. The choice of information is basically yours. Although the seven items indicated * are required, another four items are your choice to include.

___ Communication Studies Pretest Score*
___ Communication Studies Posttest Score
___ Personal goals upon graduation, five, and ten years*
___ Updated student personal data sheet*
___ A recent transcript*
____An example of your written work (preferably a major research paper)*
___ Self-assessment of any three competencies from Figure 2*
___ A resume*
___ Scholarly research report from course 483 and two major papers completed since declaration of your major
___ Examples of written work (essay, newspaper article, advertisement, script)
___ An essay answering the question "What do you study in communication?"
___ An essay on your personal theory of communication
___ Letter of reference from employment or internship source (non-university)
___ Videotape of student performance (e.g. speech, oral report)
___ Videotape of student production
___ Explanation of outside coursework completed outside the department (by department or theme)
___ Autobiography
___ Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores
___ Miller's Analogy scores
___ National Teacher's Examination (NTE) scores
___ GMAT scores
___ Other standardized test score
___ Examples of career-oriented written work (business letter, newspaper article, advertisement, script)
___ Self assessment of communication effectiveness in one extracurricular activity
___ Additional materials relating to your college study or employment experience

* Required

Appendix D: Assessment of Student Learning through Portfolio Method
Post-Program

TO: Students Graduating as Communication Majors

FROM: Communication Studies Faculty

RE: Student Portfolio

All students graduating in Communication Studies are required to update their portfolio as part of the department's ongoing assessment program. We plan to keep the materials for approximately five years. The primary purpose of this portfolio is to provide faculty with information for writing letters of reference for students. In addition, the portfolio will be used to provide information to assess our success in teaching and learning, and we need you to help us improve our program. You should not consider the file confidential. Although the nine items indicate * are required, we recommend you chose additional items to include.

___ Communication Studies Pretest Score*
___ Communication Studies Posttest Score*
___ Personal goals upon graduation, five, and ten years*
___ Updated student personal data sheet*
___ A recent transcript*
___ An example of your written work (preferably a major research paper)*
___ Self-assessment of any three competencies from Figure 2*
___ A resume*
___ Scholarly research report from course 483 and two major papers completed since declaration of your major*
___ Examples of written work (essay, newspaper article, advertisement, script)
___ An essay answering the question "What do you study in communication?"
___ An essay on your personal theory of communication
___ Letter of reference from employment or internship source (non-university)
___ Videotape of student performance (e.g. speech, oral report)
___ Videotape of student production
___ Explanation of outside coursework completed outside the department (by department or theme)
___ Autobiography
___ Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores
___ Miller's Analogy scores
___ National Teacher's Examination (NTE) scores
___ GMAT scores
___ Other standardized test score
___ Examples of career-oriented written work (business letter, newspaper article, advertisement, script)
___ Self assessment of communication effectiveness in one extracurricular activity
___ Additional materials relating to your college study or employment experience

* Required

Appendix E: Student Knowledge Assessment Form

On this sheet are a variety of topics that relate to communication studies. Consider each topic and ask yourself these questions: Could I carry on a short conversation on this topic? Could I write at least a short paragraph about this topic? If you CANNOT do so, mark response 1 (or "a") by the appropriate number on your answer sheet. Remember only indicate those topics about which you lack knowledge.

1. public speaking
2. adapting to audience
3. persuasive speaking
4. periodical indexes
5. transitional devices
6. speech intros and conclusions
7. alliteration
8. using visual aids
9. propaganda devices
10. self-disclosure
11. Gibb's supportive climates
12. Schutz interpersonal needs
13. group roles and norms
14. intrapersonal communication
15. Aristotle
16. gender communication differences
17. person perception
18. empathy
19. linguistic conditioning
20. first impressions & small talk
21. support
22. concrete-abstract language
23. gatekeeper
24. "New World Information Order"
25. Benjamin Day
26. John Peter Zenger
27. vacuum tube
28. persistence of vision
29. Farnsworth and Zworykin
30. The Jazz Singer
31. David Sarnoff
32. Joseph Pultizer
33. film editing
34. tv commercial script format
35. POV
36. XLS
37. audience analysis
38. informative speaking
39. ethical speaking and writing
40. organizational patterns
41. attention devices
42. connotative-denotation meanings
43. metaphor
44. reasoning
45. speaker credibility
46. conflict management
47. Maslow's hierarchy
48. group decision-making
49. consensus
50. managing anger
51. effective listening skills
52. characteristics of the communication process
53. nonverbal communication
54. interpersonal power
55. attribution theory
56. dissonance
57. interpersonal attraction
58. mass communication
59. vicarious identification
60. penny press
61. The Areopagitica
62. Guglielmo Marconi
63. muckrakers
64. Edward Muybridge
65. The Birth of a Nation
66. semiotic code
67. Potemkin
68. William Randolph Hearst
69. NBC's Red and Blue Networks
70. rundown sheet
71. dolly in
72. social effects of mass media

Appendix F: Student Evaluation of Teachers

Based on current research on teacher effectiveness (Cross, 1991), the items below represent the core characteristics of effective teaching. On a computer sheet, rate your teacher's effectiveness on each item.

1 = effective
2 = somewhat effective
3 = ineffective

1. concern for students
2. knowledge of subject
3. encouragement of discussion
4. preparation for class
5. ability to stimulate interest
6. enthusiasm
7. availability
8. ability to explain

Essay

Please print or type your answers in a way that will allow you to remain anonymous.

1. What is the most valuable aspect to this course and why?

2. What is the least valuable aspect to this course and why?

3. What do you like best about the teacher's instructional style?

4. What do you like least about the teacher's instructional style?

Appendix G: Student Graduate Survey (adapted from Herder, 1990)

___No answer/will try again ___ 2nd try ___3rd try

___Answered/Busy (Call back day_____ time period_____)

___Answered/Refused to respond ___Wrong number ___ Moved

___Recording ___Disconnected New number:_____

My name is _____. I'm calling you as a representative of your university to talk to you about your ideas about the program. We need your help to improve our program and would appreciate having you spend a few minutes to give us feedback.

1 = very strong
2 = good
3 = satisfactory
4 = needs improvement
5 = major concern

Please tell me how effectively you have learned these communication competencies:

1. Critical thinking skills
2. Interpersonal competence
3. Language competence
4. Leadership competence
5. Reading competence
6. Research competence
7. Oral communication competence
8. Cultural appreciation
9. Writing competence
10. Decision-making competence
11. Theoretical competence
12. Ethical/philosophical appreciation

Open-ended

13. What are your impressions about how well your program met your personal objectives?

14. What did you find most valuable about the program?

15. In thinking over the instruction you received, what teacher or teachers contributed most to your learning and why?

16. What changes can you suggest to improve our program?

17. Please tell us about your current employment or advanced study and how it relates to your degree program.

Thank you for your time. The combined answers from our graduates will be reported to the communication faculty. We appreciate your contribution to our program and hope you will keep in touch with members of the department.

Appendix H: Oral Competency Rating Form

Student:
Assignment:
Time: Grade:

Rating

_____Choice of Subject
Appropriate to speaker, audience, occasion
Appropriate to assignment and time limit
_____Introduction
Gains attention
Builds credibility for speaker
Discloses purpose
Motivates audience to listen
_____Organization
Clear and simple
Appropriate
_____Supporting material
Adequate variety of support
Use of logical proofs
Use of emotional appeals
Appeals to needs/motivations
Adequate attention devices
Appropriate use of visual aids
_____Conclusion
Makes memorable
Summarizes
Appeals for action
_____Delivery
Use of facial expressions, eye contact
Use of gestures
Effective posture and movement
_____Voice and pronunciation
Quality
Flexibility
Emphasis
Correctness and variety
_____Language
Clarity, concreteness
Vividness
Forcefulness
Style
_____Written assignment
_____Overall effectiveness of presentation

Percentage Rating Scale
10 Excellent, 9 Superior, 8 Good, 7 Fair, 6 Below average, 5 Poor

Appendix I: Written Competency Rating Form

Student:
Assignment:
Time: Grade:

Rating

_____Topic/purpose selection appropriate:
- Relates to course content
- Clearly phrased thesis statement
- Sufficiently narrow and focused

_____Research:
- Sufficient number and variety
- Correct use of style manual
- Recent or classic works cited
- Used scholarly sources
- Reference list reflects works cited
- Adequate support for ideas
- Sufficient citations for ideas used or quoted
- Evidence of research into original works

_____Writing style:
- Fits requirements of assignment
- Integrated ideas/response related to feedback on earlier draft(s)
- Clear, scholarly writing style
- Appropriate spelling, grammar, technical aspects
- Uses rules of specific instructor
- Adequate length (well-developed without being verbose)
- General headings reflect appropriate organization

_____Ideas:
- Clarity
- Critical analysis and insights
- Well-supported ideas
- Shows fresh point of view, creative insights___
- Appropriate for assignment
- Indicates careful thought and preparation

_____Overall effectiveness

Percentage Rating Scale
20 Excellent
18 Superior
16 Good
14 Fair
12 Passing below average
10 Poor

Appendix J: Student Ranking of Learning Goals

The faculty of this department has established twelve communication competencies we expect in our graduating students. We would like to know your views about the value of these competencies. Please rank the each according to this scale:

1 = extremely valuable
2 = valuable
3 = some value
4 = little value

1. Critical thinking skills
2. Interpersonal competence
3. Language competence
4. Leadership competence
5. Reading competence
6. Research competence
7. Oral communication competence
8. Cultural appreciation
9. Writing competence
10. Decision-making competence
11. Theoretical competence
12. Ethical/philosophical appreciation

Write an essay about your learning goals for this course and how you plan to accomplish them.

An Assessment Program Designed to Improve Communication Instruction through a Competency-Based Core Curriculum

Joan E. Aitken
University of Missouri--Kansas City

Michael R. Neer
University of Missouri--Kansas City

A paper submitted to the Instructional Development Division, for possible presentation at the 77th annual meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Atlanta, 1991.

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